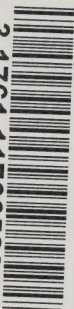


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ACCIDENT PREVENTION

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Hon. Michael Starr
Minister

George V. Haythorne
Deputy Minister

ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Accidents don't just happen they are caused and it is that constant search for the unexpected or hidden cause that plays such a large part in any safety program. Hazards, unsafe conditions and unsafe procedures are potential accident makers and must be eliminated.

Safety being an integral part of all operations should receive the same, careful consideration given any other part of the process. Any safety program has as its chief concern machines, processes and people. There is no mystery about it and there are really only two distinct problems:

- (1) The removal of physical hazards that may result in accidents, and
- (2) The creating of safety awareness on the part of all employees and gaining their complete support in preventing accidents.

The elements of any accident prevention plan, regardless of the size of the establishment to which it is applied, are embraced in three fundamental requirements. They are the will of both the senior administration officials and the employees to prevent accidents; a safe working environment; and the safe performance of employees in that environment. No establishment, large or small,

can ignore any one of these requirements and hope to do a successful job of preventing accidents.

The first consideration, the will to prevent accidents, should extend from the senior administrator to the newest employee. It must be constantly in mind that it is the employee who suffers the injury even though the cost involved by loss of services and medical care is borne by the government. The ultimate goal is the employee's safety: therefore, he should be given an active part in every phase of the program for which his experience and training adapt him. The initial impetus for accident prevention necessarily must come from the top, but active and continual co-operation by the administrator will inevitably result in the co-operation of the employee.

The next consideration is the working environment. Buildings and machines should be properly maintained, dangerous processes should be protected or altered, special personal protective equipment should be provided and every possible physical cause of accidents eliminated.

The provision of a safe working environment is one of the best ways in which to demonstrate a desire for accident-free operation. Employees will not be impressed with the need for safety if unguarded belts, pulleys, gears and machines are permitted to be operated. If

there are holes in the floors, lighting is substandard, or defective tools and equipment are supplied, employees cannot be criticized if rules pertaining to good house-keeping or safe use of machines, tools and equipment are neglected.

The third and last consideration is the safe performance by the workers. Training men to be safe workers is more difficult than creating a safe working environment. The problem is attacked in two ways: by careful selection of employees and by training employees in safe methods. The past accident record of an applicant for work should be checked, as a man who has developed a bad record in one position may do so in another.

The safety training of a worker is never finished. It starts with his first interview by the personnel man and continues throughout his working years.

Experienced administrators know the value of the simple, friendly introduction to the new job and new associates. If tensions are eased, instructions are better understood, efficiency will be more assured and the risks from potential hazards reduced. The new employee instructed at the first in safe procedures learns in a few hours things which might become the subject of weeks of "painful unlearning" were he or she not started off in the right way.

More effective than the most carefully planned induction program, however, is the attitude of the supervisors and employees generally in the department to which the new employee is assigned. An induction procedure is both sensible and necessary but it can be a waste of time unless the new employee can see that in actual practice it really works. Every branch has a distinctive atmosphere of its own and every new person who comes to it, quickly absorbs its traits, with all their implications for discipline, for good housekeeping and for safety.

ROGER DUHAMEL, F.R.S.C.
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